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ABSTRACT

This digest focuses on the data that show significant disparities between the number of teachers of color and the number of students of color and examines how well schools, colleges, and departments of education are doing in supplying teachers of color for U.S. classrooms. The document is organized into three sections. The first section discusses whether there is an increasing demand for teachers of color, and indicates the need becomes evident when one looks at how student enrollment patterns in public elementary and secondary schools have altered the makeup of the classroom. Section two addresses reasons for the decreasing supply of teachers of color including the effects of competency testing and increased opportunities in other professional fields. Although more teachers of color are completing education degrees than in previous times, the numbers are not keeping pace with the demographic changes in K-12 enrollments. The final section asks what can be done and outlines four C's of recruitment: (1) concern for the various aspects of the issue and a readiness to tackle them; (2) commitment by key leadership to the recruitment program; (3) collaboration among all those concerned; and (4) creativity in developing a program. (Contains 16 references.) (LL)

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SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF TEACHERS OF COLOR

ERIC DIGEST February 1996

by

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Supply and Demand of Teachers of Color

Mark S. Lewis

Total demand for new hiring of classroom teachers is projected to fluctuate through 1995, ranging from 187,000 to 209,000 needed annually. After 1995, demand is expected to increase to 227,000 by the year 2000 (Gerald & Husser, 1990).

At the same time, a number of national organizations have consistently stressed the importance of Black, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American role models for both minority and majority students (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education [AACTE], 1987; American Council on Education, 1988). While role models enhance a child's impression of what he or she is or can be, there is an even more important goal in securing a racially and ethnically balanced teaching population. Teachers of color bring with them an inherent understanding of the backgrounds, attitudes, and experiences of students from certain groups and therefore can help inform majority teachers on effective ways and means to communicate with students of color (Dilworth, 1990). It has also been pointed out that there is a tremendous value in diversity as it exists in a democracy: "diversity is not just an issue of color but a concept that encourages diversity of thought—the exchange of different ideas and ways to approach problems" (Michael-Bandele, 1993).

As the data show, there are significant disparities between the numbers of teachers of color and those of students of color. This digest will focus on the data and examine how well schools, colleges, and departments of education (SCDE) are doing in supplying teachers of color for the nation's classrooms.

Table 1
Percentage of Public Elementary and Secondary Student Enrollments and Teachers by Race/Ethnicity, 1990

	% Enrollment	% Teachers
White	68.0	86.0
Black	16.0	9.2
Hispanic	12.0	3.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.0	1.0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	-	0.7

Note: "-" equals less than 1%.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, 1990 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey. "National and State Summary of Projected Data." in Smith, T. M., Rogers, G. T., Abaham, N., Perie, M., Mahoney, R. P., & Martin, V. (1994). *The condition of education, 1994*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and National Data Resource Center. National Center for Education Statistics, 1990-91 Schools and Staffing Survey, "Teacher Questionnaire."

Is There an Increasing Demand for Teachers of Color?

In 1990-91, 9.2% of public elementary and secondary school teachers were Black/African American, 3.1% were Hispanic, and 1% were Asian/Pacific Islanders (Snyder & Hoffman, 1994). The need for more teachers of color becomes evident when one looks at how student enrollment patterns in public elementary and secondary schools have altered the makeup of the classroom. From 1976 to 1990, the percentage of White students enrolled in such schools decreased almost 17% . In the same period, the enrollment of Black/African Americans decreased about 2% to a total of 16%, the enrollment of Hispanics increased by 68% to a total of 12%, and the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islanders enrolled increased approximately 158% to a total of 3% (Smith et al., 1994). Table 1 illustrates the discrepancies between the race/ethnicity of the teaching force, and that of the children being taught.

Is There a Decreasing Supply of Teachers of Color?

In 1988, a Metropolitan Life study predicted that teachers of color were leaving the teaching profession in disproportionately greater numbers than their White counterparts: "Overall, 40% of the minority teachers say they are likely to leave teaching over the next five years compared to 25% of non-minority teachers. . . . Less experienced minority teachers are the most likely to say that they will leave. Fully 55% of minority teachers with less than five years of teaching experience say that they are likely to leave" (Harris & Associates, 1988). Actually, teachers of color in private schools left at a rate of 21.4% in 1987-88, while teachers of color in public schools left at a rate of only 4.4%. That attrition rate increased only slightly in 1990-91 (Bobbitt, Leich, Whitener, & Lynch, 1994).

The data indicate that the number of individuals receiving education degrees dropped throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Those decreases appear to have varied more dramatically for prospective teachers of color (see table 2, next page).

There are a number of explanations for these decreases including the effects of competency testing and increased opportunities in other professional fields for African Americans and other people of color (Darling-Hammond, Pittman, Ottinger, 1987; Dilworth, 1990, 1984). Since 1987, enrollments have increased with White enrollments increasing 19.7%, African American 18.6%, Hispanic 28.7%, and American Indian/Alaskan Native 30.9%. The only ethnic group to see a decrease has been Asian/Pacific Americans who have decreased in enrollment by 10.5% (Snyder & Hoffman, 1994).

According to data collected by AACTE, enrollments for teacher education students of color have increased over the last 5 years, but not enough to keep pace with the dramatic changes in K-12 classrooms. In schools, colleges, and departments of education (SCDE), from 1989 to 1991, Hispanic enrollments increased by 44.1%, Native American/Alaskan Natives by 29%, Asian/Pacific Islanders by 22%, and Black/African American enrollments increased by 11.9% (AACTE, 1994). While teacher education enrollments have increased by 10% since 1989, in1991, approximately 85% of teacher education students are White, 7% are Black, 4% are Hispanic, 1% are International/non-Resident, 0.5% are Native American/American Indian, and less than 1% are Pacific Islander and Alaskan Native.

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What Can Be Done?

Although more teachers of color are completing education degrees than in previous times, the numbers are not keeping pace with the demographic changes in K-12 enrollments. *Recruiting Minority Teachers: A Practical Guide*, outlines the "four C's of recruitment" as principles for SCDE recruitment efforts (AACTE, 1989):

Table 2
Number of Bachelor's Degrees Conferred in Education by Race/Ethnicity, 1977 and 1987

	1977	1987	% Change
White	125,148	78,216	-37.5
Black	12,992	4,253	-67.3
Hispanic	3,050	2,223	-27.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	707	452	-36.1
American Indian/Alaskan Native	894	1,092	+18.1

Source: Snyder, T. D., & Hoffman, C. M. (1994). *Digest of education statistics, 1994*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

- **concern** for the various aspects of the issue and a readiness to tackle them;
- **commitment** by key leadership to the recruitment program or project;
- **collaboration** among all those concerned—sharing information, resources, and responsibilities; and
- **creativity** in developing a program, being ready to combine strategies, piece elements of different programs, or even try something different.

There are annual conferences around the country that bring together those concerned with recruitment and retention to identify successful models and strategies (see Middleton et al., 1993). One such conference formerly hosted by the University of Kentucky, has now moved to the State University of New York at Oswego. Interested persons may contact National Conference on the Recruitment and Retention of Minorities in Education, SUNY Oswego, 200 Poucher Hall, Oswego, NY, 13126, (315) 341-2102.

Foundations are funding programs dedicated to the recruitment, retention, and graduation of students of color in teacher education. For example, the Ford Foundation has for the last 5 years, supported eight state consortia across the country, all working to increase the presence of students of color in teacher education programs. The DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund's Pathways to Teaching Careers is designed to increase the numbers of teachers, especially minorities, working in public schools. Similar to the Ford Consortia program, the program recruits from a variety of pools, including paraprofessionals, and adults from nontraditional backgrounds. The two programs differ significantly: the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest program provides scholarship aid for tuition, fees, books, child care, and in some cases transportation; the Ford program is programmatic in nature, providing a variety of support services to students. Although these efforts are spread throughout the country, there is still little institutionalization of successful models within SCDEs or at the state level. Most efforts are concentrated through the efforts of one or more individuals who are personally committed to what they are doing. (Thomas, 1995).

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